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STEPS TO REDUCING THOSE SUNDAY SCARIES





Beating the Sunday Night Scaries: A Guide for Early Career Teachers

Introduction

Sunday nights can feel overwhelming for Early Career Teachers (ECTs). The thought of lesson planning, marking, and managing the week ahead can lead to anxiety and restlessness. This guide offers practical strategies to help you feel calmer, more prepared, and confident as you head into the new school week.



Step 1: Understand the Sunday Night Scaries

The "Sunday Scaries" are feelings of dread or anxiety that often surface before the start of the workweek. For ECTs, this can include worries about unfinished tasks, lesson delivery, or student behaviour. Identifying these feelings early allows you to take control before they spiral.

Common signs include:

- Racing thoughts about the upcoming week
- Difficulty relaxing or switching off
- Trouble falling asleep
- Feelings of self-doubt or overwhelm

Recognising these signs is the first step toward managing them effectively.

Step 2: Plan with Purpose

Creating a clear structure for your week can reduce feelings of uncertainty and help you feel more in control.

Try these strategies:

1. Brain Dump: Write down everything on your mind — tasks, deadlines, or concerns.
Seeing things on paper helps you prioritise.
2. Top Three Priorities: Identify your top three non-negotiable tasks for Monday. Focus on achievable goals to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
3. Prep Your Resources: Spend 10-15 minutes gathering any materials you'll need.
Knowing you're prepared can ease your mind.



Step 3: Build a Calming Sunday Routine

Creating positive habits on Sunday evening can help you wind down and improve your mindset for the week ahead.

Consider these ideas:

- **Limit Work Time:** Set a clear cut-off for schoolwork. Stopping by early evening allows you time to unwind.
- **Plan a Relaxing Activity:** Watch a comforting TV show, read a book, or listen to calming music to help your mind switch gears.
- **Practice Gratitude:** Reflect on 3 positive moments from the past week to shift your focus away from worry.

Step 4: Manage Negative Thoughts

When self-doubt creeps in, challenge those thoughts with positive affirmations or reframing techniques.

Try these affirmations:

- "I have prepared as best I can; I am capable of handling what comes next."
- "I trust myself to adapt and respond in the moment."
- "One tough day does not define my ability as a teacher."

Remember, you don't have to be perfect — being prepared and positive is enough.



Step 5: Prioritise Rest and Sleep

Quality rest is crucial for your well-being and energy levels. Establish a bedtime routine that promotes relaxation.

Tips for better sleep:

- Avoid screens 30-60 minutes before bed.
- Try deep breathing or guided meditation to calm your mind.
- Keep a notebook by your bed for any last-minute thoughts — writing them down can ease mental clutter.

Step 6: Reframe Monday as a Fresh Start

Instead of dreading Monday, see it as an opportunity for progress and positive interactions with your students. Visualise small wins — a smooth lesson, a student smile, or a positive conversation with a colleague. These moments build momentum.



NEXT STEPS



Thank you!

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Instagram- @the.ect.coach

TikTok- @theectcoach

ruthadamson@hotmail.com

www.peachywellbeing.co.uk
